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SUBJECT: U.S.- EU POLITICAL DIRECTORS DISCUSSES KOSOVO,
RUSSIA, AFRICA, AND MIDDLE EAST

Classified By: Dep Pol/Econ Counselor Cari Enav for reasons 1.4 (B) and
(D)

Summary

1. (SBU) A/S Fried met July 13 in Lisbon with Political Directors (PolDirs) from the 27 EU member states and with the EU Troika political directors. The agenda included Kosovo, Russia, NATO coordination in Afghanistan, conflicts in Africa, institution building in the Palestinian Territories, and Iran's troubling activities in the Middle East. The Visa Waiver Program and Guantanamo were also raised. DG for External and Political-Military Affairs Robert Cooper represented the EU Council Secretariat and Portugal's PolDir Vasco Bramao Ramos represented the EU Presidency.

Kosovo

2. (C) Kosovo was front and center in A/S Fried's one-on-one discussion with Portugal's PolDirector Bramao Ramos and during lunch with all 27 member-states' PolDirs, carrying over into the Troika meeting later in the day. Bramao Ramos told Fried he and his EU counterparts had spent three hours on July 11 developing an "increasingly" common position and would have another meeting July 23 to flesh out the details. Serbian President Tadic is ready privately to look the other way so that we "just get it done," according to Bramao Ramos. He said the EU needs 120 days to pull it together. A/S Fried noted that helping develop a common EU position on Kosovo that allowed us to move to supervised independence together would be a major and laudable accomplishment for the Portuguese Presidency. It could also set a precedent for effective U.S.-EU collaboration when there is blockage in the UNSC.

3. (C) Over lunch with the 27 member-states' PolDirs, Fried outlined his recent trip to the region. The current UNSC draft represented a huge compromise on our part, but is nevertheless likely to be rejected, he noted. Serbian PM Kostunica, who told Fried that he would permit Serbia only to discuss "supervised autonomy," not independence, lambasted the Sarkozy plan from the G8 Summit as "an American proposal from a French mouth." He rejected the new "minimalist" resolution without having seen it. President Tadic, on the other hand, claimed to recognize the reality of the situation but lamented that he could not allow himself to be rhetorically outflanked by the nationalists.

4. (C) A/S Fried commented that Serbia, like Russia, is

misreading Europe and the U.S.: what appears to them as insurmountable divisions were merely open discussions towards a common position. Fried underscored President Bush's commitment to Kosovo's independence and noted that President Sarkozy also described independence as "inevitable." To further demonstrate the point, most EU PolDirs replied that their governments' opinions were in line with that of the United States. The Greek and the Spaniard were the two exceptions. The Greek was hostile, adamantly stressing his government's absolute need to have a UNSCR. The more conciliatory Spaniard underlined the need to avoid a choice between unity and a UNSCR. The British representative noted that if Russian intransigence forced recognition of Kosovo without a UNSCR, it would be the Russians themselves who forced such an outcome. The Italian strongly endorsed the British and U.S. view.

15. (C) A/S Fried pledged not to force a UN vote or risk a veto without consultation with the EU. He underscored the USG desire to achieve a UNSCR yet noted that we must also prepare contingency plans. The Kosovars will not likely declare unilateral independence because they have faith in the West's ability to achieve a resolution. Despite the fact that the Kosovars have agreed to delay precipitate action, the West's time is not unlimited, and we will not be able to ask the Kosovars to delay again, Fried underscored.

16. (C) Discussion of Kosovo continued into the Troika following lunch. A/S Fried commented that the U.S. and the EU have a very good chance to make this work. We will get there together, replied Bramao Ramos, but must continue to be flexible. Robert Cooper added that the differences the U.S. has seen and heard on Kosovo from the EU are not irreconcilable, "they only reflect member states working

LISBON 00001858 002 OF 004

through their differences." Solana, Cooper reported, had delivered the same message to the Kosovars during a recent trip: "You know you will have independence -- what matters is how to get there."

Russia

17. (C) A/S Fried noted that the U.S. needs to find away to avoid its two customary modes with Russia -- extreme enthusiasm and extreme disappointment. There are some issues on which we work well with the Russians, such as non-proliferation and counterterrorism, and others where we do not. On missile defense (MD), the USG is working hard to move discussions forward. The Russians were surprised by our agreement to cooperate on MD, particularly our willingness to work with Russia following their offer to discuss MD cooperation involving the Garbala radar station in Azerbaijan and even facilities in Russia itself. If Russia's aim, however, was merely to block cooperation between the U.S. and our Polish and Czech allies, they will fail.

18. (C) Russia has a mixed record on energy. Western companies are active there, but Russia's monopolistic efforts to corner transport of Central Asian gas and increase leverage over European consumers are unhelpful, Fried said. Russia's willingness to suspend gas supplies to the Ukraine was worrying and is a likely preview of further negative actions. The USG supports southern routes and, in particular, the European-backed Nabuco pipeline project to diversify supply and to allow Central Asians to access the European market without Russian control.

NATO-EU Cooperation

19. (C) Council Secretariat DG for External and Political-Military Affairs Robert Cooper noted operational difficulties in Afghanistan for the EU's ESDP mission. Cooper noted that the U.S. could be a great help by offering to use common command, control, communications, and intelligence (CCCI) equipment. Also, without an operational

agreement between NATO and the EU to share situational awareness reports, the EU mission would be in unnecessary danger. Cooper suggested that direct relations with the U.S. could allow for relevant information to be passed, avoiding the political blockages that exist through multilateral channels. A/S Fried agreed that the theological dispute between NATO and the EU was unwise and promised to follow up on Cooper's suggestions. (Note: Cooper noted that he had also forwarded these suggestions directly to his Pentagon contacts. End note.

¶10. (C) Slovenian PolDir Mitja Drobnic also commented during the Troika meeting that Turkey was blocking NATO efforts and could damage the NATO mission in Afghanistan if unchecked. He requested U.S. support in pressuring Turkey to do the right thing. A/S Fried agreed that the U.S. at times shared Europe's frustration with Turkey but wanted to move it in the right direction while ensuring its stability and development. He said an unstable Turkey could have a catastrophic affect on the region.

VWP

¶11. (C) As requested by the EU, A/S Fried described U.S. efforts to reform the Visa Waiver Pilot Program, noting that the current situation is inadequate and that we are working to include all EU states. We propose to strengthen security provisions, using the Australian model that does not require a visa but instead uses electronic advance notice, while also allowing flexibility so that all EU states are covered. The current legislation has amendments that restrict that flexibility, but the administration -- along with EU Embassies in Washington -- is working to improve the text.

African Issues

¶12. (U) Following lunch, the Troika meeting turned to Africa and the Middle East.

¶13. (C) SUDAN: The international community has to work together to establish at least minimum stability in Sudan, according to Portuguese PolDir Bramao Ramos. After the June 26 meeting on Africa, he said he was cautiously optimistic.

LISBON 00001858 003 OF 004

The EU would continue to support the security mission in Darfur until the end of 2007 and wanted to help establish a hybrid UN-AU mission follow-on. Cooper stressed that the EU recognized Sudan/Darfur as a medium to long term problem but was not willing to make an open-ended commitment. A/S Fried affirmed US support for the slight uptick in international response in Darfur and noted that the international community would have to work together to maintain pressure on Khartoum.

EC Deputy PolDir Lars-Erik Lundin noted that the AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS) program had 400 million euros overall but is now facing a two-month funding gap of 45 million euros. Would the U.S. be able to help cover the gap? A/S Fried promised to convey the request to the Department's Africa Bureau.

¶14. (C) CHAD: Cooper reported that the humanitarian crisis had become a regional conflict affecting neighboring nations. Chad was seeking international protection, and Cooper raised the possibility of establishing a UN presence to manage refugee and internally displaced camps. Bramao Ramos added that the EU viewed Chad's problems in connection with the situation in Sudan and wanted to help the African Union (AU) establish a larger role in the international response.

¶15. (C) SOMALIA: The EU was concerned about how best to create conditions to prompt Ethiopia to withdraw from Somalia. Bramao Ramos suggested that perhaps U.S. and EU counterterrorism experts could establish an information sharing program to discuss the terrorism threat in Somalia and Eritrea.

¶16. (C) DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Bramao Ramos noted that opposition leader Jean Pierre Bemba, who is still in Portugal for medical treatment, is aware he would not be allowed to remain indefinitely. However, Bemba could decide against returning to DRC out of personal safety concerns and instead decide to stir up problems as an exiled opposition leader. Another equally dangerous scenario would be if Kabila struck out against Bemba supporters in a preemptive attack to crush the opposition. Either move could be disastrous. Bramao Ramos asked that we monitor the situation closely.

¶17. (U) AFRICA SUMMIT: A/S Fried hailed the Portuguese effort to hold an EU-Africa summit but expressed his hope that Portugal would send a strong signal of support for good governance by not extending an invitation to Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe. Bramao Ramos responded that Portugal would find a solution and that the need to Europe to develop a joint strategy with all of Africa could not be held hostage to the EU's concerns about one country.

Middle East

¶18. (C) Cooper was hopeful that Tony Blair could improve institution building in the Palestinian Territories and make the most of the current opportunity to work with Fatah leaders. A/S Fried agreed that institution-building and engagement with Fatah was the best we could do presently. Rather than fearing the development of a "three state solution" with Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, A/S Fried stressed that we should work with Abbas to find a positive way forward. EC Deputy PolDir Lars-Erik Lundin encouraged pressing Israel to loosen border controls which were creating an economic crisis in Gaza. International assistance was not a sustainable replacement for indigenous economic activity, he said.

¶19. (C) All parties agreed that Iran was dangerous, played a negative role in the region, and remained largely opaque to the international community. Given the difficulties of gauging the effectiveness of the sanctions regime and the true level of internal political opposition, it was impossible to judge the timing horizon on Iran's nuclear ambitions. Despite the lack of momentum in the international community's efforts to turn up the heat on Iran, A/S Fried agreed that the Solana/Larijani dialogue should continue in the hope of a future breakthrough. In response to A/S Fried's mention of enhancing international sanctions, Cooper noted that the EU already had implemented sanctions against Iran that exceeded UNSCR 1737 requirements and, in some areas, even surpassed US measures.

LISBON 00001858 004 OF 004

Guantanamo

¶20. (C) Slovenian PolDir Mitja Drobnic commended State's Legal Adviser John Bellinger for his work on counterterrorism issues and international humanitarian law but added that Guantanamo was damaging the image of the US in Europe. A/S Fried agreed that Guantanamo was a complex issue and urged European partners to be constructive in efforts to resettle detainees. He stressed that we needed to establish a dialogue and an international strategy to respond effectively to the terrorist threat.

Hoffman